

ets'

Skinner landfill cleanup to start

Responsible polluters forced to action

By Kristin McAllister

Pulse-Journal reporter

It's been 21 years coming and three years since cleanup plans for the Skinner Landfill in Union Township were made. Finally, cleanup is about to happen.

Scott Hansen of the United States Environmental Protection Agency for Region 5 told Union Township Trustees June 8 that, after several false starts over the past few years, cleanup of the Skinner Landfill will begin by late summer or early fall.

The notorious Union Township landfill has been a topic of dispute for decades. Now the 78-acre headache just off Cincinnati-Dayton Road across from Union Elementary School will be capped in a \$9.1 million cleanup project. Capping will prevent air emissions and stop rainwater from washing contaminants into East Fork Mill Creek.

But capping means big bucks, and where that buck seems to have stopped is now getting forced into action.

Hansen, who took over the site eight months ago, said the Region 5 attorney told him to start pushing for a resolution.

"After the design was finished, our agency went into dispute resolution, which, basically, they were wanting to find additional (potentially responsible parties) to help fund cleanup," Hansen said. "They went to the courts, and they've been looking for the last two-and-a-half years for additional PRPs."

The agency attorney told Hansen to resolve the issue before cleanup costs are driven even higher and the Superfund toxic area turns into an insurmountable disaster.

"We want these guys, because we heard that the allocation was almost complete," Hansen said.

Hansen's office sent out notice letters in February to involved parties to push negotiations for

Skinner Landfill



Graphic by Jay Hapgood

swift closure so remedial action can follow, he said.

"And we have been in negotiations ever since," he said.

If the responsible parties have not yet agreed to sign the consent agreement for the cleanup by mid-July, Hansen said, either his agency will issue an order forcing the companies to perform the cleanup, or the EPA will complete the work.

"One way or the other, it's going to be done," Hansen said.

Trustee Catherine Stoker expressed concern about available funds for the project. Hansen said the EPA will have money in time for the cleanup, even if the companies do not pay for it.

"Before this year, we didn't have the funds, but after I took over the site, I put in for remedial action prioritization for funds this year," he said. "If by July 15, we find out that they are not going to do it, or they don't sign the order, our agency will have the funds to do it."

Hansen said negotiations are going well, and that he expects full cooperation.

"I think they're having more fights within their group than they are with us," he said.

Safeguards will be set up to monitor the area during the cleanup, Hansen said.

After Stoker voiced her concern about making the public aware of the EPA's scheduled work for the cleanup, Hansen said his agency will meet monthly with either the trustees or the West Chester Coalition on the Skinner Cleanup, which is now being resurrected.

"We're obviously interested in what effect the cleanup will have on surrounding communities," said David Gullay, township administrator.

The area has been continually monitored, and will continue to be for toxic pollutants, Hansen said.

"The last time samples were taken at the two monitoring wells near Mill Creek, they continued to show nothing," he said.

Photo by Karen McAllister
County Sheriff's Office
Union Township Police Department
Department Store
Veteran of the Sheriff
consists of 12 officers
ded for parts. The

